



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of Wisconsin*

517 East Wisconsin Avenue

Milwaukee, WI 53202

PRESS RELEASE

August 7, 2008

Corrected Information - Age Correction

De Pere Restaurant Owner Indicted for Hiring and Harboring Illegal Aliens and Possessing Firearms

United States Attorney Steven M. Biskupic announced that on August 5th, a federal grand jury in the Eastern District of Wisconsin returned an indictment charging restaurant owner Yu Tian Li, 27, of De Pere, Wisconsin with three separate counts of harboring illegal aliens for financial gain and two separate counts of possession of a firearm by a prohibited person.

According to a criminal complaint filed on July 21, 2008, the investigation started when Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents received a call from the Wisconsin Department of Corrections concerning a juvenile employed at Li's De Pere restaurant, China King Buffet at 310 North Wisconsin Street and living with Li at his DePere residence. During a subsequent visit to Li's home, ICE agents discovered at least three illegal aliens residing at his home. The complaint alleges that two of the three reported they were from the Peoples Republic of China while the other man stated he was from Mexico. The criminal complaint also alleges that Li operated the restaurant and knowingly hired the three illegal aliens to work for him. It is also alleged that Li harbored them at the residence he owns in De Pere.

Over the last several years, ICE has dramatically enhanced its efforts to combat employers who unlawfully employ illegal aliens in the United States. The agency's strategy for effective worksite enforcement is aimed at promoting national security, protecting critical infrastructure, and ensuring fair labor standards. Last year, ICE secured more than \$30 million in criminal fines, restitutions, and civil judgments in worksite enforcement cases.

According to Brian Falvey, resident agent-in-charge of the ICE Office in Milwaukee, "bringing criminal charges against unscrupulous employers and targeting their illegal profits are tactics we are adopting nationwide. ICE has found criminal sanctions to be a very effective deterrent to illegal employment schemes."

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan H. Koenig. If convicted, Li faces a maximum possible penalty of 10 years imprisonment and a fine of not more than \$250,000 for each separate count of harboring an illegal alien and each separate count of possession of a firearm by a person previously convicted of a crime of domestic violence. It should be noted there is also a mandatory \$100 special assessment and up to three years of supervised release on each count.

It should be noted that an indictment is merely the formal method of charging an individual and does not constitute inference of his or her guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until such time, if ever, that the government establishes his or her guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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